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Identical letters dated 26 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the fifty-second report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017) (S/2018/619).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regrets that the authors of the reports of the Secretary-General and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) continue to take a politicized and negative approach to the Syrian Arab Republic and its institutions. Moreover, the Government deplores the fact that, in the report under consideration, the authors continued to ignore its concerns and the questions that it posed to the relevant Secretariat officials and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in its response to the fifty-first report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017) (S/2018/484).

The negative approach adopted by Secretariat officials and OCHA has increased the conviction of the Government that United Nations humanitarian affairs officials are incapable of answering those logical and objective questions. In fact, they are incapable changing or improving their approach, which does not contribute, in any manner or form, to strengthening the humanitarian response in Syria. Their approach is solely aimed at serving the interests of certain Western States, and their proxies in the region, that are hostile to Syria and are influential within the Security Council.

Following is a brief overview of the position of the Syrian Government with respect to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the report under consideration:

Improving the living conditions and ensuring the security and safety of Syrians are the highest national priorities of the Syrian Government. Those priorities are in keeping with its constitutional mandate and its commitment to national law, the principles of international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions concerning humanitarian affairs. In order to achieve that goal and ensure decent living conditions for and provide basic services to Syrians, the Government provides every form of support, and far in excess of the amount provided by any other party, including the United Nations. The Government does so despite all the difficulties and challenges that the Syrian State and its institutions face as a result of terrorism, the

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practices of States that support terrorism, the crimes committed by the international coalition and the illegal unilateral, coercive measures that are being imposed on Syria by several States and entities, such as the United States of America and the European Union.

The report under consideration is supposed to focus on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, rather than on developments in the quest for a political settlement. The Syrian Government reiterates that it rejects the lack of distinction between mandates and the introduction of political issues into a report on the humanitarian situation, a report that the authors of which are supposed to ensure is not politicized in any way.

It has now become imperative to hold the authors accountable for contravening the resolutions of the Security Council on counter-terrorism and for using the term "armed opposition in Idlib" to refer to the Nusrah Front or the Levant Liberation Organization and their affiliated and associated groups, which have been listed as terrorist entities by the Security Council.

It is unacceptable for the authors to be so blatantly politicized in their approach, as demonstrated by the fact that they hold the Syrian Government responsible for the failure to deliver humanitarian assistance, yet they ignore the real obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Syria, including, in particular, the lackadaisical manner in which OCHA representatives in Damascus have gone about their responsibilities in Syria, their refusal to move into liberated areas and areas that have concluded reconciliation agreements, and the extreme selectivity that they have demonstrated in carrying out their work and distributing assistance, functions that are meant to carried out in a humanitarian and non-discriminatory manner. Another significant obstacle is the shortfall in funding. To date, only 30 per cent of the funding required is available. Meanwhile, some donors have tied their funding to political requirements that are contrary to the principles of humanitarian work and have refused to support the rehabilitation of Syrian service facilities, which could make it possible for refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes in dignity and safety. Other obstacles include the theft of humanitarian aid by terrorist groups, which have complicated the delivery of aid to civilian beneficiaries, and the inability to secure supplies for humanitarian relief operations because of the economic measures that Europe and the United States of America have taken against the Syrian people.

The Syrian Government pays no heed to any descriptions or terms to which it has not agreed, particularly given that, in the past, those terms have been used solely for political purposes and exploitation; they have never been used in a constructive manner to support the Syrian people.

The greatest obstacle to humanitarian work continues to be the conduct of States that are hostile to Syria, their ongoing support for terrorism and their efforts to prolong the crisis and impede efforts to resolve it and restore security and stability. The most recent example of that conduct was the decision of the United States of America to provide $6.6 million in additional support to the "White Helmets" terrorist organization, the principal arm of the Nusrah Front terrorist organization, with a view to having the former carry out acts of terrorism, in particular acts of chemical terrorism, against Syrian civilians, in order to distort the image of the Syrian Government and prolong the war being waged against it.

The authors remain silent about the support that certain States continue to provide to terrorist groups in Syria, and they continue to cover up the aggression being committed against Syria by the "international coalition" and its militias, together with Turkey, France and Israel. The authors also have nothing to say about either the attempts by certain States to interfere in the internal affairs of Syria, or the

disastrous effects of the coercive, unilateral economic measures that have been taken against Syria by several actors, including the European Union and the United States, and the impact that those measures have had on the humanitarian situation in Syria. The Syrian Government wishes to reiterate that such conduct by the authors demonstrates that they do not abide by the humanitarian principles governing United Nations humanitarian operations, namely, impartiality, objectivity and neutrality.

The Syrian Government reaffirms that the Security Council should stop issuing these monthly reports, because they serve no purpose other than to provide a platform for certain States that are hostile to Syria to incite against and defame the Syrian State, and to waste financial and human resources that could be used to provide actual assistance, not imaginary assistance, to the Syrian people. These monthly reports should be replaced by quarterly reports that are written in professional and credible manner.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative